THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The recommendations of Justice Talwar Committee are under consideration of the Government.

Post Offices in Tribal Areas of Karnataka

3719. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there are some villages and tribal areas and mountaineous areas in Karnataka where there is no Post Office as on 30th June, 1998;

(b) if so, the number thereof; and

(c) the time by when post offices will be set up there?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 170 villages in tribal areas and 670 villages in hilly areas do not have post Offices.

(c) The Opening of new Post Office is subject to the fulfilment of justification based on norms and availability of required resources. A target for Opening of 2 new Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices in tribal areas of Karnataka has been fixed for the year 1998-99.

Telephone Connections in Sultanpur District of Uttar Pradesh

3720. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH SURYA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) The target fixed for providing telephones in rural areas of District Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh and has that been achieved;

(b) If not, reasons thereof;

(c) Whether Gram Pradhan of Misirpur Jalalpur in Kadi Pur tehsil of Sultanpur approached for a connection;

(d) If so, action taken thereon; and

(e) Whether there is any proposal to open a telephone exchange which would cover the Gram Sabha mentioned above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Target was fixed for the year 1997-98 for Village Public Telephones for covering 230 vollages in Sultanpur district. The achievement is 321 UPTs.

(b) Not applicable in view of (a) above.

(c) Prabhan of Misirpur, Jalalpur applied for VPT at Balua and not for village Misirpur Jalalpur.

(d) Since the VPT No. 6621 in village Balua of Gram Sabha Misirpur Jalalpur is existing from Karaudi Kalan exchange, therefore, another VPT cannot be provided in the same village as per existing policy.

(e) There is no registered demand at Misirpur Jalalpur, however there is a plan to open an exchange at Akhandpur, 9 Kms away from Misirpur Jalalpur.

Foreign Firms Interested in Providing Internet Services

3721. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalised their views on the question of ending monopoly of the Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) over the Internet as they are unable to meet the growing demand for new connections;

(b) if so, the present status of the deliberations;

(c) whether some foreign firms have shown interest to provide Internet connections to certain towns like Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada etc. through satellite link; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?